

VZCZCXRO8329
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2844/01 2961223
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 231223Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5197
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002844

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y
ADD CLASSIFICATION REASONS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: KURD LEADERS IN DIYALA: INCREASED ARAB
INTIMIDATION OF KURDS

REF: BAGHDAD 1311

BAGHDAD 00002844 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: OPA Deputy Director Henry Wooster for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

11. (U) This is a Diyala PRT Message.

12. (C) Summary: Kurdish leaders in Khanaqin (Diyala Province) claimed increasing tensions between Arabs and Kurds in nearby Jalula and Saadiya are a result of intimidation from Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and a Ba'athist resurgence in the area. The Kurdish leaders voiced their support for what they see as favorably positioned joint border checkpoints. However, they predicted that their relative power in Iraq is weakening, and that Kurdish parties would have fewer parliamentary seats after the upcoming elections. End Summary.

KURDS INSIST KHANAQIN IS KURDISTAN

13. (C) During an October 9-11 visit to Khanaqin city in northern Diyala Province, numerous Kurdish political leaders and local officials, including Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) deputy party leader Alaa Al Deen Dawoodi, and former Khanaqin Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party leader Muhsin Ali Akbar described the city of Khanaqin as a defacto part of Kurdistan. Khanaqin Investigative Judge Habib Hameed Ali told PRToff that his courthouse is &under the KRG8 and that while Arab defendants are sent to courts in Baqubah, Kurdish defendants are referred for trial in Sulaymaniyah or Erbil. The Kurdish leaders, refrain to PRToffs was that all of Khanaqin, including the cities of Mandali, Jalula, Saadiya, Qara Tapa and oil-rich Nafkana are historically Kurdish and rightfully belong to Kurdistan.

KURDS ACCUSE GOI OF DELAYING ARTICLE 140 TO &ARABIZE8
KHANAQIN

14. (C) Rabiha Hama Abdulla, a Kurdish member of the national Council of Representatives said areas like Sinjar and Khanaqin were &low-hanging fruit8 in comparison to Kirkuk and should be resolved quickly under the Article 140 process. However, Kurdish leaders were generally skeptical about their ability to use Iraqi institutions such as the judiciary or COR committees to move the Article 140 agenda forward. Kurd leaders in Khanaqin, including the Article 140 Committee representative for Khanaqin, Adnan Mansoor, asserted that a timely resolution was not occurring because PM Maliki and the GOI were purposefully delaying the census and Article 140 negotiations in order to &Arabize8 traditional Kurdish areas like Jalula and Saadiya.

KURDS claim Police and Army INTIMIDATION IN JALULA AND
SAADIYA

15. (C) Moreover, Kurd leaders in Khanaqin claimed increasing tensions between Arabs and Kurds in Jalula and Saadiya are a direct result of PM Maliki and the GOI using the Iraqi Security Forces to Arabize these cities. Salah Konya, PUK leader reported that the Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP) have recently increased intimidation of Kurdish families living in Saadiya and Jalula. Amir Rifa,at, KDP representative for Jalula, and others pointed to the June 7, 2009 Bashar Al Kheir IA operation as the most recent GOI attempt to weaken Kurds in Jalula) decrying the deaths of Kurdish civilians in the operation. Rifa,at and others reported that IA and IP regularly harass Kurdish political party headquarters in Qara Tapa, Saadiya, and Jalula. Konya stated that some 500 Kurdish families had fled Saadiya over the past few months as a result of the intimidation tactics. Rifa,at said that IP forces in Jalula reported directly to Baghdad instead of through Baqubah.

KURDS CLAIM RESURGENCE OF BA'ATHISTS IN JALULA

16. (C) Diyala Kurdish leaders, including Provincial Council Chairman Abdul al-Talib Mohammed Hassan and a Kurdish COR Representative said that the Ba,athist ideology was alive and well in Diyala, and continues to provide a fertile ground for recruiting insurgents. He said it would take a generation to change these attitudes. Local Kurdish party leaders reported that Kurds on national police Emergency Reaction Forces (ERF) in Jalula, as well as regular national police forces, had been pushed out or transferred, and replaced with Ba,athist Arabs from the Kirwi tribe who they said have ties to Al-Qaeda. Furthermore, Aref Adil Jassam, the mayor of Jabara, and Mohammed Wala Hassan, the mayor of Khanaqin, reported that recent threats to assassinate mayors

BAGHDAD 00002844 002 OF 002

in the area should be attributed to pro-Ba,athist groups such as Naqshbandi (JRTN). Sheikh Yacoob Yousef Ali, an Arab from the Leheb tribe in Jalula told PRToffs that many Arabs and Kurds have good relations in the region, but that nefarious actors, such as the Kirwi tribe, were undermining good relations and promulgating Ba,athist ideologies and organized crime.

KURDS VOICED SUPPORT FOR JOINT CHECKPOINTS IN KHANAQIN

17. (C) Diyala Kurdish leaders generally voiced approval of the proposed joint Arab-Kurd boundary checkpoints because they believe it establishes a de facto border favorable to their position. The mayors for Jabara and Khanaqin stated that they would support the checkpoints if there was oversight from the United States. The party leaders, including PUK and KDP, blamed Arabs for not supporting the proposal. Kurd leaders in Khanaqin were insistent that two of the checkpoints be placed south of Jalula; something that they indicated represented the proper green line between what was the KRG and Iraq. They also questioned the command and control structure of the checkpoints, insisting that US forces be in charge and that they remain at the checkpoints over the long-term.

MAJOR KURDISH PARTIES PESSIMISTIC ABOUT UPCOMING ELECTIONS

18. (C) The major Kurdish political parties in Khanaqin spent little time discussing the upcoming Iraqi parliamentary elections during their meetings with PRToffs, emphasizing that the tensions around Jalula were their number one concern. Dawoodi and others expressed concern about 10,000 Kurdish families in Khanaqin who were not able to register

during the voter registration update because they lacked the correct ration card series. In general, the major Kurdish party leaders, including Jalal Sa,eed of the Kurdish Socialist Party, projected that the Kurdish position would be weakened in the upcoming elections. This was in contrast to local representatives for the Change Movement who are beginning to operate in Khanaqin and optimistically hoped to gain 10-15 COR seats in the upcoming elections.

19. (C) Comment: Kurdish leaders in Khanaqin repeatedly stressed that the cities of Jalula and Saadiya are the fault line in Arab-Kurd tensions in Khanaqin. This narrative promotes the underlying Kurdish assertion that cities north of these areas are unquestionably Kurdish and belong to the KRG. Kurdish leaders said their patience was waning with regards to tensions in Jalula, suggesting that if the situation & ignited8 it would quickly spread to other areas.

While tensions do appear on the rise in Jalula, Kurd leaders in Khanaqin also appeared eager to paint a negative picture that would encourage continued USG engagement and strengthen what they perceive as their weakened power position. End comment.

FORD